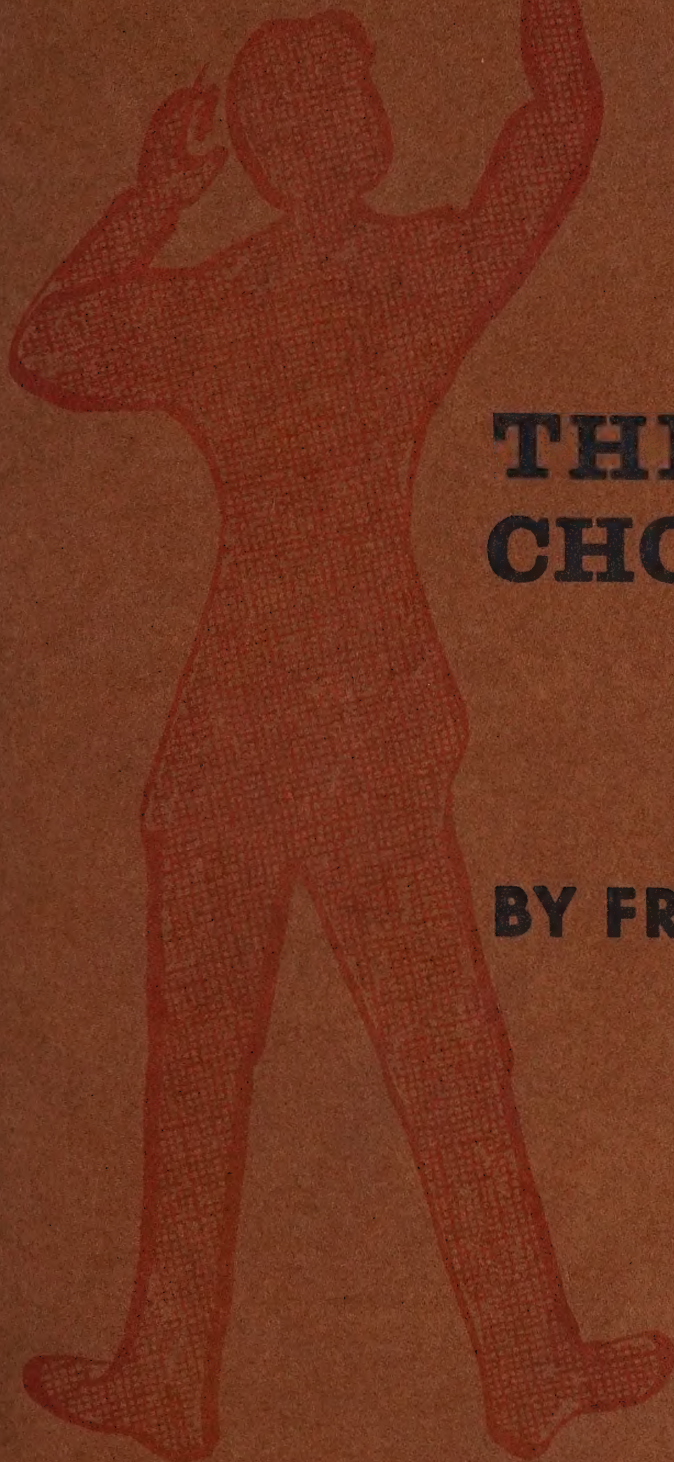


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# **THE CHOIRMASTER**

**BY FRANK HAWORTH**

**COMMUNITY PROGRAMS DIVISION**







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## INTRODUCTION

Singing in choirs is by far the most widely-spread and readily available form of organized music-making. Surveys have shown that the number of choirs, of all kinds, in the Province of Ontario, runs into the thousands; and the reason for this popularity (apart from the needs of the churches) is not far to seek—the voice is the one instrument of music that we all carry around with us, from the cradle to the grave, and little other equipment is needed for the operation of a choir.

That is not to say, however, that little knowledge or skill is needed, especially by the person in charge of the proceedings—the choirmaster. But this is a need, unhappily, that is easier to recognize than to provide for—even at the professional level. Opportunities for the formal study of choral techniques are not exactly plentiful, and for the majority of amateur choir-masters they are virtually non-existent. Community Programs Division seeks to remedy this situation by providing courses in the subject at various levels, from the graded three-evening Area Courses to the residential, week-long District Institutes and Provincial Institute. This booklet briefly summarizes the material covered in these studies.

The three-session Area Courses (so called because they are offered to students from two or more communities in an area) begin by outlining the entire subject (as set forth in the following pages). Then some of the topics mentioned in the outline are studied in depth, while others are discussed more briefly, or left over until the next course. Thus, the first course, or Stage 1, is concerned mainly with such fundamentals as the teaching of basic musical skills to choir members, and the arts of direction. Stage 2 passes on to detailed study of the choir's work—the learning of actual music, and the arts of performance; and Stage 3 carries all these studies to a higher level. The residential District Institute (which is really Stage 4) covers the entire subject, and sums up all that has been dealt with in the Area Courses.



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The final Provincial Institute considers chiefly the choir as a community activity, and the needs and qualifications of leaders and instructors in wider choral fields. In addition there will be 'refresher' courses from time to time, for those who have gone through the regular series, and want to keep in touch.

We would like to emphasize that the knowledge, skill and dispositions needed by the successful choirmaster are not difficult to acquire, by people of even moderate musical attainments. These courses, stressing the practical aspects of the subject, with plentiful opportunities for participation and practice, are designed to develop those powers and qualities in the students, together with that understanding of people which is essential to success in choir work—as in life generally.

### The Principles of Choir Direction

The choirmaster's function and responsibility is to establish and operate a choir. This involves recruiting and organizing the members; training them in the necessary musical skills; selecting suitable music to sing, and teaching it to the members; directing performances; and managing the choir's affairs generally, alone or in conjunction with a committee or other organizing body.

To accomplish this calls for personal qualities of leadership—the choirmaster must be able to command the respect and maintain the enthusiasm of the members. It also calls for a degree of technical ability and artistic capacity—he (or she) requires enough knowledge, and skill in the subject, in all its branches (including teaching it), to impart it to the members, and to present it effectively to the listeners.

Success in choir work, therefore, results from attention to:—

- the basic skills; musical grammar, reading, ear-training and the elements of the art of singing
- the constitution and personnel of choirs
- the choir's work; choral techniques and potentialities, and the arts of performance generally
- the choirmaster's art; the techniques of conducting
- repertory; choice of music
- the personality and attitudes of the choirmaster
- organization and management





The following notes outline general principles in these matters:

## 1 BASIC SKILLS

Without some degree of development of the vocal powers, choral singing in any real sense is impossible; and while it is not actually impossible without skill in music reading, its attainment is laborious and time-consuming in the extreme, since it can only be accompanied by monotonous and wearisome imitative and repetitive methods. (See page 7.) Fortunately, skills in both singing and reading are easy to acquire, in a measure, by modern methods that combine studies of both simultaneously; and it is well worth the choirmaster's while to set up classes for the instruction of members who lack these skills.

Such classes may be held, if convenient, for half an hour or so immediately before the regular rehearsal time; and others besides absolute beginners can profit from them. Many singers 'pick-up' rather than learn the art of reading—from instrument-playing, for example—and can benefit from formal instruction in it; the vocal approach differs a good deal from the instrumental. Moreover, the 'class' habit, once established and accepted, can be very useful in actual rehearsal; many a tricky point can be cleared up easily by a few minutes at the blackboard.

Instruction is based on two fundamental principles in teaching:—

proceed from the known to the unknown: i.e., start with something the pupil already knows, or can do, and show how that leads to something new to him;

teach the thing before the sign: e.g., teach sounds themselves before you teach the marks that represent them on paper.

In applying these, we start with breathing, the foundation of all vocal work—and something familiar to everybody. We show how breathing produces musical sound—the beginning of voice-training.

We listen to, criticize, and so memorize a sound, and we compare it with another sound (the beginning of ear-training); then we show how it is written down (the beginning of eye-training). We present all the remaining sounds in the same way, and the details of time-keeping, rhythm and the rest, until the pupil has acquired sufficient skill and knowledge to deal with the regular music of the choir's repertory. (Details of a suggested course will be found in the booklet, Instructions for Class Singing.)

Skill is a matter of habit; and acquiring habits is a matter of repetition; so drill in each new point we teach is vitally important. No less important is evaluation—criticism of the students' efforts, pointing out faults, and correcting them by repetition.





## 2 THE CONSTITUTION AND PERSONNEL OF CHOIRS

A choir may be described as a group of singers, assembled for the formal, artistic performance of music especially designed to exploit the possibilities of the various kinds of voices. In this it is different from the casual gathering for a 'sing-song', of which the object is momentary individual satisfaction, without regard to artistic quality in either the performance or the material.

### The Purpose of the Choir

For many of us 'choir' usually means 'church choir'; that being the kind with which we are most familiar; to some of us indeed, it comes as a surprise to learn that there are other kinds. But choirs have been organized by many other bodies—clubs, lodges, industrial groups, schools, theatre groups.

Of special interest is the community concert choir, in which all singers can participate, regardless of other affiliations. A community choir may give public concerts of secular choral works and lend grace to communal occasions. The purpose of the choir has an obvious bearing on its membership, repertory and organization.

### Personnel

Musicians recognize four main types of voice:

Soprano: the high voice of women (and boys) — clear, flexible, brilliant. Average range, for the untrained or partially-trained, is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  octaves upwards from middle C. There are several varieties—the lyric and dramatic, and the colorature — a thin, very supple kind, able to execute fast, brilliant passages and florid music generally.

Alto or

Contralto: the low voice in women—usually richer, more 'veiled' and heavier than the soprano. Average range— $1\frac{1}{2}$  octaves upwards from the G below middle C.

Tenor: the high voice in men. Average range is about the same as the soprano, but an octave lower. Varieties are the lyric and the 'robust' or dramatic.

Bass: the low voice in men — generally stronger and more penetrating than its female counterpart. Average range is about the same as the contralto, an octave lower.

Trained and good natural voices can exceed the ranges indicated here; but at







the present time true soprano and alto voices seem to be becoming rare, and tend to be replaced by the mezzo-soprano, which comes somewhere between them, but lacks the essential characteristics of either. Similarly the baritone seems to replace true tenor and bass voices. The causes of these changes are not known; but they tend to reduce the types of voices available from four to two, and they create difficulties in the performance of some items. The once-common male alto has almost entirely disappeared, and the considerable repertory of music written for him has accordingly gone out of use.

### Types of Choir

In choral music each kind of voice (e.g., all the sopranos together) sings a separate part, or line of the music, different from the others, but harmonizing with them. There are various ways of organizing this, giving rise to various types of choir.

The male voice choir is usually in four sections—  
first and second tenor, first and second bass (known as TTBB);

The female voice choir is commonly in three parts—  
first and second soprano, and alto (SSA);

The mixed choir is in four parts—  
soprano, alto, tenor and bass (SATB).

Music is commonly published for these groupings; but there are many possible variants.

The type of choir promoted in a particular community should be dictated by local circumstances and prevailing conditions, such as what voices are available. Unhappily, people are not always realistic in this matter. The mixed choir is the favourite, but in districts where male voices are not available in numbers to make a satisfactory balance, it might be better to concentrate on developing a good choir of female voices.

### Layout and Arrangement

The importance of having a choir well laid out cannot be over-emphasized. Each member should be given a fixed place relative to the others, and should be required to occupy it every time the choir assembles. This will produce a familiar situation, and the confidence that goes with it—an important factor in public performances; it is a valuable element in discipline. And it helps greatly in conducting always to know who is where.

The actual grouping will be controlled to some extent by the nature and circum-







stances of the building in which the choir has to work. The least satisfactory arrangement of the voices is in one or two long, straight lines, which thins and diffuses the tone, and makes control difficult. The best is the semi-circular or fan-shaped formation:—



In large choirs, back-benchers should be raised.

### Accompaniment

Ideally, choral music is unaccompanied. Duplication of the singers' notes by a keyboard instrument muddies them, and spoils the intonation, flexibility, delicacy and colour-possibilities of choral work.

More elaborate pieces, however, sometimes have independent keyboard parts, which do more than merely double the voices; they add something of their own. These often call for a good deal of technical skill in the player, who must also be a quick and accurate music-reader and a careful listener, with a good sense of balance, and a developed ability to pick up and follow a beat, and to respond to expressive variations. Such players, unhappily, are in short supply.

Large-scale works require orchestral accompaniment, and the detailed handling of this demands knowledge that the amateur choir conductor rarely possesses. If the players are reasonably skilled and experienced, however, a great deal can be accomplished simply by giving them clear leads, and a definite beat. (See *The Choirmaster's Art*, page 8.)





### 3 THE CHOIR'S WORK

The choir must first learn the music, then perform it; each of these functions has its own techniques and potentialities.

#### Learning the Music—

If the members can read music, there is no problem here. The choirmaster can immediately give his attention to technical and artistic matters. If many of the choir members cannot read they have to be taught by imitative methods—by 'dictating' the music to them, a short amount at a time—preferably by singing it, clearly enough for them to grasp, and often enough for them to remember. If at all possible, sectional rehearsals should be held in such cases; it can be tiresome to have to stand around waiting for the others to learn their parts—and getting your own part confused while you listen.

To help the learners, both readers and non-readers, by appealing to their observation and understanding, the shape of the music should be pointed out—its rises, falls and jumps, its climaxes, rhythmic features and so on; also its patterning—its repetitions, contrasts and variations.

#### Technical and artistic matters for study include:—

- accuracy of notes and rhythm; clear articulation of notes
- good tone and its development, by listening, analysis, criticism and the use of exercises—for production, projection, placing, etc.,—importance of soft singing in rehearsal
- proper tonal relationships of the notes with one another (the 'line' of the music)
- clarity of words—pronunciation: need for some exaggeration; importance of endings. Common faults—slovenliness, 'lip-laziness' ('id is' and 'irr-is' for 'it is', etc.)

#### Performance—factors involved are:—

- Presentation of the music: attack (getting started); pace (a much more important matter than seems to be generally recognized); balance (so that one part—e. g., the alto—will not be drowned out by another—e. g., the soprano); texture and focus, which make for clarity in the harmony and part-writing.
- Expression: the eloquence and 'oratory' in music; line, phrasing, and form (the pattern and design in music); dynamics (loud and soft); climaxes, endings.





- Interpretation: the content and meaning of songs; style and mood; traditions and influences in performing some types of music—national, historic, aesthetic, etc.; the significance of the words.

We may as well admit that there is no short cut to acquiring the skills needed to achieve all these things. But much can be done by being aware of them and their nature, and every choirmaster should own a musical dictionary. Choirmaster and choir members can learn by listening critically to works heard in concerts or broadcasts, or on records, by studying the choral music in hand, and by general reading.

#### 4 THE CHOIRMASTER'S ART

Besides training his choir, the choirmaster directs it in performance, which he starts, controls, varies and ends—so that the presentation and interpretation of the music are, in fact, his. He does this by the process of conducting, which consists of a series of signals made with his arms to tell his singers what he wants them to do. Some choirmasters direct their singers from the keyboard of a piano or organ; but unless you are either (a) a genius, or (b) without an efficient accompanist, this procedure is not recommended.

Conducting involves three processes:

- beating time
- general direction (i.e., starting and stopping, sectional entries, etc.)
- indicating expression (i.e., volume changes, pauses, etc.)

To be successful, the signals for each of these must have two qualities: they must be clear and unmistakable, and the singers must understand them thoroughly. It follows that they must be simple, well-considered and sufficient for their purpose, limited in number, and given with precision. Vague, indefinite gestures and postures, however graceful and 'poetic', tell the performer nothing, and merely distract the audience.

#### The baton

In this connection the choirmaster is strongly urged (the current fashion to the contrary notwithstanding) to use a baton. The advantages of this are both practical and psychological. A baton is easy to see and follow, and helps focus the performers' attention; as a kind of instrument itself, it imposes a discipline on the conductor's movements—it helps to prevent mere gesticulation, and to promote precision. It is an ancient symbol of control and authority, and





so tends to suggest a particular relationship between the conductor and his forces—the leader and the led—a subtle way of boosting the leader's 'image'. And it requires a certain technique in its handling; a simple technique, certainly—but if it is well mastered it will both promote its user's self-confidence, and inspire respect in his charges.

### Beating time

This is a much neglected art, even in the profession, since it became fashionable to dispense with a baton, and to rely on indefinite personal gestures, supposedly indicating one's own 'feeling' about the music. But it is important if only because it fulfils three functions vital to the performers:—

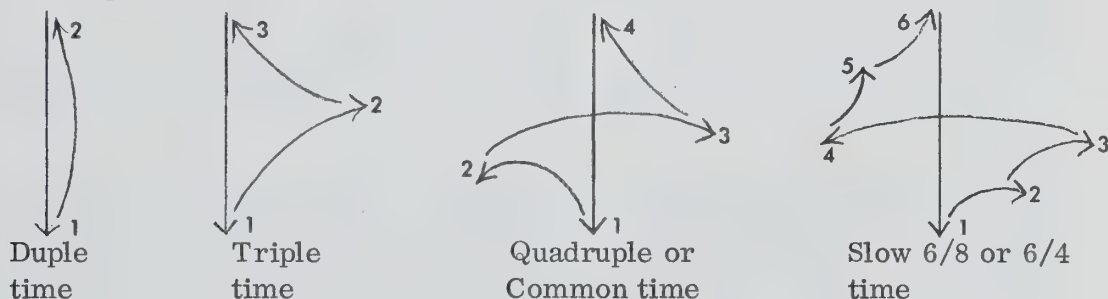
- it gives them definite signals—it 'communicates';
- it indicates the precise rhythm to them;
- it tells them exactly when to start, and how fast to go—their primary need.

Time-beating is usually carried on with the right arm; it should be practised until the various patterns have been thoroughly mastered, and can be repeated unselfconsciously and indefinitely, without deviation. Many ways of doing it have been evolved: the following is offered as being probably the most widely known and used, and the simplest to master.

Two general principles are:—

- the movement, or stroke, for the first beat of the bar is always down, and the last up
- the precise moment of the beat—the end of the stroke—should be indicated by a slight 'click' or flick of the wrist.

The main patterns of the strokes are:—



N.B. Fast 6/8 time is beaten in the same way as duple time.





Other schemes of patterns have been devised; those above are simple, and in common use.

### General Direction and Expression—

In general, the right arm indicates the rhythm, as shown, and the left arm controls other technical and artistic factors—entrances (of the whole choir, or of sections of it), endings, etc.,—and expression—crescendos and diminuendos, pauses, accents, etc. Big movements, of both arms, indicate loudness—small ones, softness.

## 5 REPERTORY and CHOICE of MUSIC

The origins of the choir are lost in the mists of history; but in something like its present shape it can be traced back at least as far as the 12th century—making it by far the oldest form of organized music-making in existence. During all that long time an enormous amount of music has been composed for it—including some of the finest productions of the human spirit. There is plenty of material available; and the choirmaster owes it to himself and to his singers to explore in the field—if only to hold choristers' interest with the stimulus of something new, and the occasional challenge of something more difficult than their usual fare. He has only himself to blame if members drift away because they are bored with incessant repetition of a dozen items, week after week and year after year. 'Something old, something new' is a good recipe for holding their interest—and their allegiance.

Choice of music is governed partly by practical considerations, partly by aesthetic ones—the question of standards. In the first category are such factors as the time available for rehearsal, the level of achievement of the members, and whether the choir is purely a church choir or proposes to engage in concert work. In the latter case local conditions have to be taken into account, such as the general cultural level of the neighbourhood, and the religious affiliations of members, or prospective members—clearly, you may be inviting trouble if you try to impose the service or devotional music of a particular denomination on a mixed group—or a mixed audience, for that matter, in some localities.

As regards standards, the matter is admittedly a thorny one, tastes varying as they do, and one that can call for a great deal of tact on the choirmaster's part. We will only recommend here that he should avoid the cheap, the trivial and the over-commercial on the one hand, and the abstruse, the extreme, and (usually) the avant-garde on the other. If he has taken over a choir which is committed to—or is demanding—work which he knows to be unworthy, or unsuitable, he is





in a difficult position. His best course is one of gentle, unobtrusive education, by the gradual introduction of better things, in the hope that a taste for them will develop.

Most of the older masters, from Palestrina and Byrd to Brahms, wrote splendid choral music, much of it well within the capacity of the reasonably capable choir. Modern English-speaking composers like Elgar, Delius, Holst, Vaughan Williams, Parry, Stanford and the Canadian, Healey Willan, have produced excellent choral work. This music is often broadcast, and much of it has been recorded. For his own personal edification and enrichment, the choirmaster should listen to it whenever opportunity offers, and note items that might suit his own choir. Publishers' catalogues give details and prices; these may be had merely by writing for them.

A good plan is to obtain examples of the works of various masters and to study them—not only for their suitability for your own choir, but also to learn the styles and methods of their composers, to appreciate their quality and to use them as a yardstick for measuring the worth of other compositions.

## 6 THE PERSONALITY and ATTITUDES of the CHOIRMASTER

The regard of the members for the choirmaster, as well as the choirmaster's appreciation of the characteristics and needs of the members, are most important factors in the success of the choir. Discipline is vital, and this can only be achieved by the choirmaster's authority, which he has to assert and maintain. This authority, however, must not be of the stern (or patronizing) 'father image' variety, much less of the loud-mouthed and domineering kind. These merely drive the members away. It must be based on superior knowledge and skill—not formally claimed by the choirmaster, but sensed by the members, and readily acknowledged. Otherwise we have the blind leading the blind. Such knowledge and skill should be cultivated—by study and practice (including playing an instrument, if possible), concert-going, listening to radio and recordings, reading books and periodicals on music, and interesting one's self in cultural matters generally. These activities, rewarding in themselves, are reflected in the enriched personality of the choirmaster—and its impact on the members.

In actual practice, the members judge their leader by his bearing before them—and respond accordingly. He should know how to combine cheerfulness with seriousness of purpose, and how to employ humour without being flippant; he must be firm, but not severe; and he must insist, courteously, on punctuality, prompt obedience to directions, and general compliance with his instructions.





(He should also, incidently, cultivate a reasonably resonant speaking voice, so that his instructions may be heard by his charges, without recourse to shouting).

The choirmaster, on his part, must understand the attitudes, backgrounds and motivations of the members. Why do people join choirs? For many of the same reasons that they join other groups—companionship, satisfaction in achievement, etc. But they also join for one or two special reasons inherent in the nature of choral activity. These may be summarized;

#### Internal Motives:

There is usually a specialized, personal reaction to music, different from that felt towards other subjects. You can get interested in ceramics, millinery or bird-watching because chance throws them in your way, because a friend's interest arouses your curiosity or just because you have been casting around for something to do. But for music you need a special kind of personal response, a 'feeling' about it—at least if you are to persevere in it, or take any pains with it. There are many theories about how this is acquired, but it undoubtedly exists. Some people are evidently 'musical' in a way others are not.

#### External Pressures:

Many choir members, even the most highly musical, join choirs in the first place simply because they are asked to. In childhood they are pushed in, willingly or otherwise, by parents and teachers. In later life they join at the invitation of the leader, the choirmaster, minister or pastor who wants them, not so much for their own sake, or even for the sake of making music, but because the organization needs a choir. This makes it a matter of social urgency or religious duty, and even of conscience, in some cases. This attitude, by suggestion, may colour their feelings about all choirs, church or otherwise.

The effect of these motives, in actual choir work, can vary a good deal, depending on their relative strengths. The duty-urge can be something of a burden and can lead to superficiality—to the feeling that a minimum of effort discharges the duty. 'Let's get it over!' This is especially likely if the general character of the choir's activity is perfunctory, casual and desultory. More rarely this urge can have the opposite effect and promote an over-serious approach. This may result in a certain assertiveness, and even aggressiveness, to make the other members treat the matter with solemnity at all times. Ideally, a combination of duty-urge and music-urge should produce a disposition to do one's



best to meet the spirit and challenges of the situation.

The very musical are ambitious. Even before they are trained they sense their own powers and seek greater challenges. They soon become bored with a limited and unadventurous repertory and low standards of performance. But they can also exaggerate their own abilities. Before their talents are developed, they may want to tackle things that are beyond them, and become discouraged and discontented in consequence.

The natural, built-in musical responses of true choristers make them appreciate the value of training, up to a point at any rate. But training has to be judiciously carried out, or their natural impatience to be using their powers in new ventures will make them chafe at restraint. So the matter, manner, comprehensiveness and pace of training call for careful consideration and judgement.

Sense of duty can make choir members a sort of 'captive audience'. But to presume this and allow desultory rehearsals, and poor discipline, or use casual, uninspired approaches, perfunctory methods and dull, monotonous repertory, is apt to be resented.

Natural musicality, with its sense of rhythm and feeling for melody and harmony, produces appreciation of the need of teamwork, and willing submission to the disciplines that promote it. It also leads to awareness of the factors involved in communication, and ready responses to them—i.e., to conducting and sensitivity to expressive needs and functions. At the same time it can prompt a certain critical attitude toward the choirmaster and some disposition to question his ideas and methods. This can be countered by the development on his part of genuinely superior knowledge, skills and cultural attainments.

## 7 ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT

Church and other institutional choirs usually operate within an established framework or set-up. The time and place of rehearsal and performance, and the general nature of their activities are settled for them, and recruiting of new members is more or less automatic. The leader of these choirs may have little to do with organization matters. But with the independent concert or community choir—and to an increasing extent with church choirs, as they tend more and more to emerge from the choir-loft onto the concert platform—the case is different. Some attention has to be paid to questions of management and public relations.





Such questions may include: hire of a rehearsal place and piano; recruiting drives for members; purchase of music, and building of a library; concert and 'festival' negotiations—venue, advertising, ticket sales, program printing, press liaison, postage and travelling expenses, stewarding, and so on. Some of these things cost money, so the matter of finance arises, with the further questions of subscriptions and membership fees, patronage, and contacts with local authorities and influential groups, for grants and subsidies. There are also such possibilities as supporting and collaborating with other musical interests—orchestras, bands, soloists—and participating in general community occasions.

If a choir's operations develop on any considerable scale, they can impose a heavy burden on the choirmaster; and the question of appointing officers—secretary, treasurer, librarian, stewards and so on—may be considered. Besides reducing the work-load on the conductor, this is a useful way of promoting keenness and esprit de corps, by giving key members a personal stake in the success of the undertaking.





## GLOSSARY of TERMS USED in CHOIR WORK and TRAINING

### ACCOMPANIMENT

Properly, an independent instrumental part that 'goes with' the voices, and adds something of its own to the total effect (i. e., not a mere duplication of the voice parts on a keyboard). In large-scale works it is usually intended to be played by an orchestra.

### ARTICULATION

Clear statement or utterance of each note, without blurring or indistinctness, especially when there are several notes to one word or syllable.

### ATTACK

A clean, definite start. 'Silence — then sound!'

### BALANCE

Having the right volume of sound from each section of the choir, so that some sections are not 'drowned out' by the others.

### BEAT

A division of time, conceived in the mind, and used to measure the duration of notes and rests. Beats can be shown outwardly by clapping, tapping, counting, conducting, etc.; their length (of time) may vary from one piece to another, but they should all be the same length in the same piece, or main section of a piece.

### BLEND

Agreement, or matching, in the tone-quality of the voices, so that no individual voice stands out from the others.

### CANON

A composition in which each voice, or group of voices, sings the same tune, but starting at different times, in such a way that good HARMONY is produced. A round is a particular kind of canon.

### CANTATA

A concert work for choir, soloists and (usually) orchestra, consisting of a series of separate compositions linked in style and content, and unfolding some theme or story. In effect, an opera without stage, action or costume.

### CHANT

Vocal music that is not in strict, or METRICAL rhythm—that does not have a fixed number of BEATS in a bar.



## CHEST VOICE

The lower REGISTER of the voice, differing in quality and effect from the upper register. The ordinary or 'normal' male voice—so called because it was formerly believed to originate in the chest. See REGISTER, HEAD VOICE, COLOUR.

## CHORD

In general, any group of notes sounded together; but the term is restricted in practice to groups of notes that are related in particular ways, and produce characteristic effects. See COLOUR, COUNTERPOINT, HARMONY.

## COLOUR

In music, refers to the differences detected by our ears between the REGISTERS of the voice, the tone-qualities of various instruments, the natures of CHORDS etc., which are supposed to correspond to differences in colour, as detected by our eyes.

## COMPASS

The same as RANGE.

## COUNTERPOINT

A 'part' (e.g., alto, tenor etc.) in a musical TEXTURE which not only makes satisfactory CHORDS and good HARMONY with the other parts, but which is also melodious (and therefore interesting to sing or play) in itself. Also, music constructed in this way, by combining MELODIES. The CANON is a particular kind of counterpoint.

## DICTION

The art of making clear the words, in singing.

## DYNAMICS

Changes in volume, from soft to loud (crescendo) and loud to soft (diminuendo). An important element in EXPRESSION.

## ENSEMBLE

Accuracy of timing, so that the notes of a CHORD are sung (or played) exactly together.

## ENTRANCE, ENTRY

The 'coming in' of a voice part (e.g., alto, Tenor etc.) after a silence (rest)—usually with some outstanding melodic PHRASE. A feature of some kinds of COUNTERPOINT. (Also called a LEAD.)





## ENUNCIATION

Clear pronunciation of the words.

## EXPRESSION

Those features in performance that impart life and variety to musical utterance, and hold the listener's interest, by conveying or suggesting the mood, style and character of the music performed. Such features include DYNAMIC changes, pace and its variations, NUANCES, points of climax, pauses etc.

## FOCUS

The voice-part that holds the main interest at any moment in the course of a work; the shifting of the main interest from one voice-part to another.

## FORM

The 'shape' of music—its formation in PHRASES, and the combining and building-up of these into 'sentences', 'movements', etc., on the principles of repetition, contrast, VARIATION, extension, development etc.

## GRAMMAR

As applied to music, the study of the more elementary aspects of the musical material—sounds and their relationships, time and rhythm, and the notation of these, or the methods of indicating them in writing; together with instructions for performance in matters of pace, volume and EXPRESSION. Also known as 'rudiments'.

## HARMONY

The arts of arranging CHORDS in effective sequence, and of selecting appropriate chords to accompany the notes of a MELODY; the study of all that is involved in sounding notes together.

## HEAD VOICE

The upper REGISTER of the voice—the ordinary or 'normal' singing voice of women and children. So called because it was formerly believed to originate in the head. See REGISTER, CHEST VOICE, COLOUR.

## INTERPRETATION

Performing in such a way as to convey the composer's meaning and intentions; attention to the factors of style, manner and mood, and to historical, traditional, national, religious, characteristic, personal and other features in the music performed. An important element in this is EXPRESSION.





## INTONATION

Singing (or playing) 'in tune': an element in the study of relationships in PITCH between the notes—their degrees of 'highness' and 'lowness'.

## KEY SIGNATURE

The group of sharp or flat signs placed at the beginning of each line of a piece, to indicate the chief scale used by the composer in constructing it. It tells the singer on which line or space doh comes.

## LEAD

The same as ENTRANCE (but unfortunately the word is also loosely used with other meanings).

## LINE

The smooth flow of sound that results when successive notes are alike in their TONE quality.

## LYRIC

Originally a short, meditative poem for setting to music; so, a song of that nature, and music in general having that quality—sometimes used as the opposite of 'dramatic'. Also applied to a singer specializing in such songs—e.g., 'lyric soprano'.

## MELODY

A succession of single notes arranged in RHYTHM, in such a way as to have character and individuality. A tune.

## METRICAL

In strict or regular RHYTHM—used to describe a composition that has the same number of BEATS in each bar. Its opposite is RHAPSODIC.

## NUANCE

A momentary departure from regularity, in volume of tone, pace, rhythmic pulse or pattern, etc., indicated by the composer, or introduced by the performer, for the sake of effect. An element in EXPRESSION.

## ORATORIO

A CANTATA on a sacred subject.

## PART WRITING

The assigning of the various notes that make up CHORDS to the various 'parts' (voices and instruments) performing a work; the arts of doing this effectively. An element in the study of HARMONY and COUNTERPOINT.



## PHRASE

A fragment of MELODY or of musical TEXTURE that impresses the ear as being complete (or having some degree of completeness) in itself; it has a definite beginning and ending, and a main point or climax. See FORM. 'Phrasing', in performance, is making these features clear to the listener, and balancing or contrasting the phrases with one another, when required. An element in EXPRESSION.

## PITCH

The 'highness' or 'lowness' of a sound. (Determined by the number of vibrations per second of the object producing the sound—string, air column, VOCAL CORD etc.)

## PLAINSONG, PLAINCHANT

The traditional music of the church, which is in RHAPSODIC or 'free' RHYTHM, and in unison, as opposed to later music, which is in METRICAL rhythm, and harmonized, and known as figured (i.e., decorated) music.

## POLYPHONY

'Many sounds'. Actually another name for COUNTERPOINT—especially that of certain historic periods or 'schools' of music, from the 16th to the 18th century.

## PROJECTION

Using the voice in such a way as to make it 'travel'—be heard clearly at a distance without shouting or strain. This results from developing the power of RESONANCE.

## RANGE

All the notes that a voice can sing (or an instrument play) from its lowest note to its highest. Also, that section of all the notes available for musical purposes that a particular kind of voice or instrument uses—e.g., 'soprano range', 'cello range'. The same as COMPASS.

## REGISTERS

Those parts of the RANGE of a voice produced by changes in the adjustment of the VOCAL CORDS. They differ considerably in their character and effects, and are an important element in the composition of choral music. See COLOUR, CHEST VOICE, HEAD VOICE.

## RESONANCE

The 'ring' of a voice—multiplication or amplification of vibrations of the





VOCAL CORDS (by means of the air in the sinuses and elsewhere), to increase the volume of the sound produced, and to aid PROJECTION.

#### RHAPSODIC

In irregular RHYTHM—having unequal numbers of BEATS between accents; the opposite of METRICAL. See CHANT, PLAINSONG.

#### RHYTHM

'Something repeated after intervals of time'. For musical purposes, time is measured in BEATS, and the 'something' that is repeated is a stressed beat, or accent.

#### TEMPO

Actually the Italian word for 'time'—but used in the English-speaking world to mean 'pace', or 'speed' (especially in such phrases as 'dance tempo', etc.). A tempo and tempo primo both mean 'return to the original speed' (after a change).

#### TEXTURE

The complete 'substance' of music—the combination of MELODY, HARMONY, COUNTERPOINT, etc., that a composer uses in a piece.

#### TONE

The quality of the sound produced by voices (and instruments), individually or in the mass, which may be described as rich, thin, full, hard, rounded, etc. (But the word is unfortunately used in other, unrelated senses.)

#### VARIATION

Changing of some of the notes, time-values, etc., in a PHRASE (or other section of a piece—see FORM), when it is repeated, for the sake of variety, and to hold interest.

#### VOCAL CORDS

The two strips of elastic tissue in the throat, made to vibrate by the passage of air from the lungs as we breathe out, and so to produce the sound. They can be adjusted (tightened and slackened) in various ways, by muscles attached to them, to give sounds of different PITCH and quality (REGISTERS).

#### VOICE PRODUCTION

The arts of training and managing the voice so as to obtain the best results—in TONE, LINE, ARTICULATION, control of the RANGE and REGISTERS, PROJECTION, RESONANCE, etc.,—without strain.









